

CAPITAL IS ONLY THE FRUIT OF LABOR *

(The Bees, the Drones, and the Wasp)

Some Bees had built their comb in the hollow trunk of an oak. The Drones asserted that it was their work, and belonged to them.

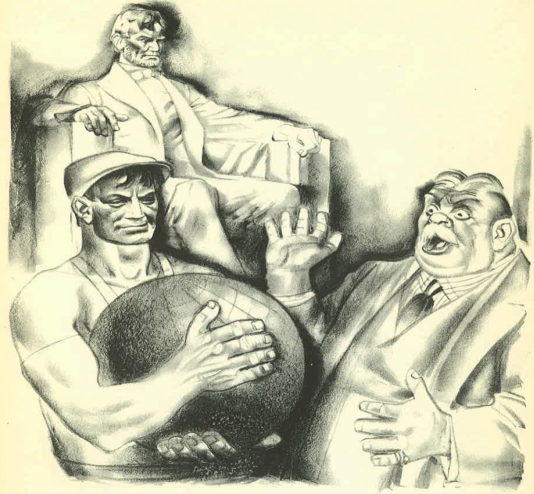
The case was brought into court before Judge Wasp. Knowing something of the parties, he thus addressed them:

"The ends of justice, and the object of the court, will best be furthered by the plan which I propose. Let each party take a hive to itself and build up a new comb, so that from the shape of the cells, and the taste of the honey, the lawful proprietors of the property in dispute may appear."

The Bees readily assented to the Wasp's plan. The Drones declined it. Whereupon the Wasp gave judgment:

"It is clear now who made the comb, and who cannot make it; the court adjudges the honey to the Bees."

* From Abraham Lincoln's message to Congress, December 3, 1861: "Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration."



THE NEGRO, THE FOREIGN-BORN,
AND DISCRIMINATION

(The Trees and the Axe)

A Woodman came into a forest to ask the Trees to give him a handle for his Axe. It seemed so modest a request that the principal Trees at once agreed to it, and it was settled among them that the plain, homely Ash should furnish what was wanted.

No sooner had the Woodman fitted the poor Ash to his Axe, than he began laying about him on all sides, felling the noblest Trees in the wood.

The Oak, now seeing the mistake too late, whispered to the Cedar: "The first concession has lost all; if we had not sacrificed our humble neighbor, we might have yet stood for ages ourselves."



Diego Rivera, *My Art, My Life: An Autobiography* (with Gladys March). New York: Citadel Press, 1960. [Republished by Dover Publications, Inc. in 1991].

The center of my mural showed a worker at the controls of a large machine. In front of him, emerging from space, was a large hand holding a globe on which the dynamics of chemistry and biology, the recombination of atoms, and the division of a cell, were represented schematically. Two elongated ellipses crossed and met in the figure of the worker, one showing the wonders of the telescope and its revelation of bodies in space; the other showing the microscope and its discoveries — cells, germs, bacteria, and delicate tissues. Above the germinating soil at the bottom, I projected two visions of civilization. On the left of the crossed ellipses, I showed a night-club scene of the debauched rich, a battlefield with men in the holocaust of war, and unemployed workers in a demonstration being clubbed by the police. On the right, I painted corresponding scenes of life in a socialist country: a May Day demonstration of marching, singing workers; an athletic stadium filled with girls exercising their bodies; and a figure of Lenin, symbolically clasping the hands of a black American and a white Russian soldier and workers, as allies of the future.

From the discussion of commodification and opposite the portrait of Aristotle in Gellert's "Karl Marx's Capital in Lithographs," New York: Ray Long and Richard R. Smith Publishers. 1934.

Aristotle's outstanding genius is shown by his discovery that a relation of inequality or essential likeness underlies the expression of the value of commodities. It was the only the historical limitations of the society in which he lived, that prevented his discovering the real nature of this relation of equality.

From the discussion of the prolongation of the working day from Gellert's "Karl Marx's Capital in Lithographs" and opposite the imagery of the punishment of Ixion:

Aristotle, the greatest thinker of antiquity, letting his fancy run, said: "If every tool, when called upon, or even of its own accord, could do the work that befits it, just as the inventions of Daedalus moved of themselves, or the tripods of Hephaestus went on their own initiative to their sacred work -- if the weavers' shuttles were to weave of themselves -- then there would be no need either of apprentices for the master craftsmen or of slaves for the lords."